

PROFESSIONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT

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Introduction

Professional career development involves thoughtful self-assessment, career planning complemented by preliminary strategies that help an individual develop and achieve personal and professional goals. Professional career development is important in assisting an individual in creating a fulfilling work-life that considers their personal goals and desires. Career planning guides an individual on the skills sets and competencies they should be keen to acquire to fulfil their long-term career goals in their chosen career path. Moreover, self-assessment of personal skills and competencies enables an individual to be aware of career gaps to be developed in order to secure the desired career. This assignment aims at assessing my professional career development skills to showcase my employability to potential employers.

Skills and knowledge that contribute to working effectively as a financial analyst

In the modern globalised and ever-changing work environment, it is mandatory for an individual to equip themselves with the necessary skills and knowledge to secure and develop their careers in any organisation. Skills and knowledge are critical in promoting better work performance and productivity (Loon, 2016). Also, apt skills and knowledge promote the confidence of an individual in the execution of the assigned roles by an employer. Knowledge is the theoretical understanding of the particular job field an individual works or intends to work in. Knowledge is mainly acquired through prior work experience or education. For instance, financial knowledge on the different aspects of business finance is mandatory to complete the roles of a financial analyst in an organisation (Cobo, 2013). Skills are the personal capabilities and capacity required of an individual to complete the roles and responsibilities assigned to a particular job. An individual needs to possess both technical and soft skills to exemplarily perform their job roles. Technical skills are industry-specific skills that are needed for one to understand how to dispense their job roles accurately. Soft skills allow an individual to interact and collaborate with other employees (Kirton, 2012). Below are the skills and knowledge that contribute to working effectively as a financial analyst:

Knowledge competencies and technical skills: According to Feldman (2014), financial analyst roles and responsibilities require diverse and wide knowledge in all matters related to finance. For example, an individual should have financial planning knowledge, budgeting and financial accounting knowledge. As a result, an individual should pursue a financially related course at a university or college. Or rather, an individual can also acquire this financial knowledge through working experience in a related financial field. Moreover, financial analysis jobs require strong mathematical and analytical skills. Mathematical skills allow an individual to

understand arithmetical and statistical calculations. Analytical skills promote the ability of an individual to examine financial information and gain useful insights (Gerstein and Friedman, 2016).

Teamwork skills: The ability to work as a team is of growing importance in the contemporary workplace. Employers are welcoming diversity in opinions or innovative strategies that promote the achievement of organisational goals (Cameron, 2016). Individuals need to work as teams in order to successfully complete complex projects. As a result, an individual should have the ability to collaborate, share knowledge and contribute positively to the achievement of team and project goals. For instance, as a financial analyst, I should effectively collaborate with other members of the finance department and the management to ensure the achievement of organisational financial goals (Cobo, 2013).

Communication skills: Cottrell (2015) outlines that both verbal and written communication skills are useful in the performance of the roles of a financial analyst. Strong verbal communication skills allow individuals to properly share their opinions and ideas with their team or employers. For example, good verbal communication skills are critical in my presentation of financial insights and persuasive ideas to my team and management. I must be able to communicate fluently and present my views in a satisfactory manner that enhances their decision-making process. Correspondingly, verbal skills should be supplemented by proficient written communication skills (Loon, 2016). Written communications skills help me to write financial reports and professional emails to my team or clients.

Problem-solving skills: Cameron (2016) asserts that modern employers are keen to employ individuals that creatively identify and suggest solutions to the emerging issues within the company. Problem-solving skills require an individual to grasp the facts and data on a given problem in order to apply relevant knowledge to solve the problem. For instance, a good problem solver is able to brainstorm ideas and alternatives that a team or an organisation can adopt when problems arise in the implementation of a prior strategy (Feldman, 2014). As a financial analyst, good problem-solving skills will enable me to define the root of financial problems facing a company as well as suggesting mitigating financial strategies the company can adopt.

Time management skills: A financial analyst needs to possess exemplary time management skills. Time management skills enable an individual to observe deadlines and work within stipulated work frames. Likewise, time management skills allow an individual to be objective in

the achievement of their personal and work goals (Gerstein and Friedman, 2016). For example, as a financial analyst, it is expected of me to deliver reports on the different projects or financial position of a company after a given period of time. For that reason, I must be able to deliver these reports on time to facilitate efficient planning of organisational activities and decision making.

Review on my readiness for employment

After the completion of my degree studies, I would love to secure employment in order to practically apply my financial analysis knowledge and skills. Modern employers prefer individuals who have vast academic knowledge, experience and skills. I am currently pursuing a degree in business management which is expanding my financial knowledge and understanding (Cobo, 2013). My working experience as a financial planner and consultant has helped me to understand and analyse different financial problems and aspects, augmenting my analytical and arithmetical skills. Furthermore, I possess both soft and technical skills, which will supplement my work performance and productivity. For instance, I have strong mathematical and financial analytical skills that will enable me to examine and build useful insights from financial information of my future employer or client. To complement my hard skills, I possess proficient communication skills, team working skills and problem-solving skills, which are the most important basic skills a financial analyst must possess. In conclusion, in view of my academic competencies and skills, I believe that I am a productive and ardent prospective employee an organisation desire (Feldman, 2014).

Personal evaluation of my strengths and areas of further development

It is my greatest desire to pursue a financial analyst career after the completion of my degree studies. A financial analyst career has been my career of dreams and choice, having been brought up by parents with affiliated financial careers. I carried out a personal evaluation of my strengths and weaknesses in pursuing my financial analyst career (Cobo, 2013). As a financial analyst, I am tasked with the roles of collaborating with the company's financial team to create strategic financial plans. I also have to examine the company's financial results in comparison with financial plans and budgets to ensure that all operational activities satisfy these plans and budgets.

My Strengths: My strengths denote the skills and competencies I excels in. I have vast knowledge of financial analysis and management. I have successfully completed my higher diploma education and am currently pursuing my degree in business management. The

subjects I am currently undertaking are continuously widening my financial management and analysis knowledge. Apart from academic excellence, I have been working at a financial consultancy firm for the past two years as a financial planner and consultant. This has also improved my knowledge and understanding of matters related to financial analysis and management (Feldman, 2014).

I have commendable teamwork skills, which have enabled me to collaborate with other members of teams assigned on various projects at work. I have also been a team leader in various projects, which has diversified my leadership skills and abilities too. Additionally, I have been able to develop my communication skills aptly. Being a financial planner and consultant has sharpened my listening skills since I have to listen to a client's goals and proposals to properly advise them (Cottrell, 2015). Likewise, I have to communicate my financial advice both verbally and through professional emails. As a result, I have grasped the art of communicating and presenting my opinions in a logical and understandable manner. Furthermore, I pride myself on my strong problem-solving skills, which has been numerously lauded by my colleagues at work and school. I am able to assess the facts and figures surrounding a given financial problem, thus formulating creative and feasible solutions (Kirton, 2012).

My weaknesses: However, I have poor time management skills, which makes me lag behind in the completion of my assigned roles. Poor time management skills have also contributed to my late delivery of financial reports, which has made me be severally summoned by the finance manager (Loon, 2016). I am intentional about deploying every time management strategies to ensure I improve on my time management skills. For example, I am mastering the art of scheduling and breakdown my tasks to ensure I complete each task in time. As much as I possess good communications skills, I still struggle with my presentation skills. I shy off from presenting my ideas and opinions to different audiences, especially the managers and investor clients of my company (Gerstein and Friedman, 2016). This has made other members take credit for my opinions and ideas. I am planning on undertaking online short courses on how to improve my confidence and presentation skills.

Career goals and personal action plan

According to Cobo (2013), my career goals and objectives entail both short term and long-term goals I desire to achieve in my career path. All these goals are geared at increasing my professional knowledge and experience to promote my work performance and career growth. Besides, my career goals and objectives are also focused on enhancing my personal

development through improving my soft skill continuously through new experiences and challenges. My long-term career objective is to continuously expand my skills and knowledge through continuous career learning and development programs. This is to ensure my skills and knowledge remain relevant amidst the ever-changing work environment (Feldman,2014). Also, I aim at developing the skills I am poor at and also acquiring more skills through embracing new experiences and challenges. For instance, I plan to enhance my time management and presentation skills.

Personal action plan

Cameron (2016) defines a personal action plan as a framework that assists an individual to attain their personal and career goals. My personal action plan stipulates the specific goal I want to attain, how-to and after how long I intend to attain the goal. A personal action plan ensures that my goals are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timely. For that reason, my career action plan highlights how I will attain both my short term and long-term goals. Below is a personal action plan for my career goals and objectives:

Objective	Strategy /Reason	Career or personal actions to be undertaken	Short term or long-term action	Time scale
Develop my time management skills	-I intend to enhance my time management skills in order to complete my assigned goals when due without failure. -I also intend to learn how to properly utilise my time in order to prioritise important and urgent tasks	-Learn task scheduling and planning -Normalise the use of to-do lists to break down my tasks to ensure they are completed on time -Practice time conscious in my daily activities, even career unrelated tasks.	Both short term and long term	Short term Three months Long term Infinite
Augment my presentation skills	I plan to learn how to present my ideas and opinions in a logical	Undertake online confidence and presentation courses	Short term	One month

	and understandable manner Moreover, I am keen on working on overall confidence and self-esteem. This is to enable me to present my ideas to different audiences without shying off.			
Continuous expansion of my knowledge and current skills	I anticipate perpetually enhance my professional knowledge and skills to grow and remain relevant	-Embrace learning and development sessions -Learn new emerging skills that boost my current skills	Long term	Throughout my career till retirement

Reflection on the recruitment and selection process

I have adopted the Gibbs reflective model in reflecting my interview experience. The Gibbs reflective model has assisted me to completely examine all the aspects of my interview experience, including both the bad and good aspects. The Gibbs reflective model outlines six stages an individual should use to completely assess their experience in any activity. These stages include; description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion and action plan (Cobo, 2013). The description stage assists an individual to recall all the details regarding a given activity or situation. The feelings stage explores the feelings and thoughts an individual had through an experience and how it impacted their attitudes and perceptions towards the activity. The evaluation phase focuses on the positive and negative aspects of the situation. It requires the utmost honesty and specificity. The analysis stage is also an important stage that helps an individual to make sense of the different aspects that transpired within the situation. After evaluation and analysis, an individual has to conclude and highlight various aspects they would adopt to improve the outcomes in future. Finally, an action plan is a set of strategies or actions individuals would adopt to ensure more improved and desired results (Gerstein and Friedman, 2016).

My interview session was conducted virtually through a zoom platform. The interview session was between me and my colleague, who questioned me regarding my skills and knowledge in pursuing my financial analyst career as well as my readiness for employment. At first, the thought of the interview session made me anxious and expectant. This is because I was not entirely familiar with the colleague I was paired with. I am also not fond of being put in the spotlight with questions whatsoever (Feldman, 2014). However, at the commencement of the interview session, the interviewer welcomed warmly to the session and was very friendly. The warm and friendly atmosphere made me be at ease, reducing my anxiety levels. Likewise, the interview session made me reflect on the skills I possess towards pursuing an affiliated financial career. I was also able to identify the areas of strength and weaknesses. I am also able to listen keenly and respond appropriately to questions which affirmed that I had great communication skills (Kirton, 2012). However, the virtual session did not guarantee me confidentiality as they could be a third party listening to the interview session, which made me apprehensive.

The interview session was an educative and insightful session. It made me be aware of my strengths and weakness, which has prompted me to develop a personal career action plan to plan on how I can work on these weaknesses (Cottrel, 2015). It also made me aware of additional skills and competencies such as technical skills that I should be keen to develop in order to be fully competent to work as a financial analyst. In future, I would recommend a face-to-face interview so that I can be assured of confidentiality as well as build one on one rapport with the interviewer.

Conclusion

Professional career development is necessary for assisting an individual in attaining a career they are passionate about. Professional career development prompts an individual to set specific and attainable goals they desire to achieve throughout their career. In addition, career development plan allows an individual to assess their strengths and weaknesses in pursuing their career of choice. Self-assessment influences and individual to create a career action plan that is centralised at outlining actions they intend to enhance their area of weakness as well as achieve their career objectives.

References

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Appendix: Roleplay**APPLICATION FORM**

Please complete the following form to apply for a job with us.

PERSONAL DETAILS

Name: John Brook

Address: BOX, 235, LONDON

Email address: johnbrook@gmail.com

EDUCATION BACKGROUND

University/course: Bucks University: Higher diploma in business management

Bucks university: Degree in business management (Ongoing)

WORKING EXPERIENCE

Work title	Years of experience	Year range
Financial planner and consultant	2years	2018- 2020

SKILLS LEVEL (Tick appropriately)

Skills	Low	Medium	High
Time management skills	✓		
Mathematical and analytical skills			✓
Team working skills			✓
Communication skills			✓
Problem-solving skills			✓
Presentation skills	✓		

Interview session

The interviewer welcomed the interviewee to the interview session, which was held through the Zoom platform due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It was centralised on the skills, competencies of a financial analyst. The interview session was as follows:

Interviewer: Why would you like to become a financial analyst?

Interviewee: I have always dreamt of becoming a financial analyst since I was a child since I was brought up by parents who had affiliated financial careers. For that reason, becoming a financial analyst will be the fulfilment of my long term desires. Also, having pursued business management, I am focused on practically applying my financial management and analysis knowledge to promote the financial growth and stability of organisations.

Interviewer: What are the necessary skills you possess that will enable you to perform excellently as a financial analyst?

Interviewee: Yes. I am confident I have the necessary skills that are critical in performing the roles of a financial analyst. First and foremost, I have commendable mathematical and analytical skills. These skills are profound in understanding and gaining relevant insights from financial statements. Also, I have excellent communication skills and team working skills. Communication skills enable me to rely on and listen to opinions or information from clients, management and my team. Team working skills facilitate my apt collaboration with all the members of the team. Furthermore, I am flexible and open to learning or developing any additional skill that will enhance my performance as a financial analyst.

Interviewer: Do you think you have proficient academic knowledge and work experience to fulfil the roles of a financial analyst?

Interviewee: I believe I possess proficient academic knowledge and working experience to become a financial analyst. I have been working as a financial consultant and planner for the past two years at Amazon. Correspondingly, I have successfully completed my higher diploma in business management and am currently pursuing a degree in business management.

Interviewer: Will, your profession as a financial analyst, fulfil both your personal and career goals?

Interviewee: Yes. It will fulfil my passions and personal interests. Likewise, it will enable me to increase my financial knowledge and skills, which will enhance my career growth and development.

Interviewer: What are your weaknesses? And how do you plan on improving on them?

Interviewee: I am aware that I have unsatisfactory time management and presentation skills, which have deterred me from working to my full potential. I plan on using various time management improvements strategies such as scheduling and the use of to-do lists. I also plan to enrol for an online course to augment my presentation skills and provide me with tips on how to improve my self-confidence.

Interviewer: Do you have any questions you would like to ask or any suggestions?

Interviewee: What are the additional skills I should develop to enhance my competency as a financial analyst?

Interviewer: Technological skills. In the modern work environment, it is mandatory to acquire good technical skill since every activity is highly computerised.